



GRIP

Glasgow's Review of International Performance





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Reading through the GRIP submissions, I am struck by one dominant feeling - a shiver, that particular excitement that comes from uncovering something for the first time.

This shiver happens during live performance because, as part of an audience, we are at once intimately alone, able to be taken somewhere else very personal, whilst simultaneously sharing something together as a group, a temporary community.

I am also struck by the way in which we define ourselves, our identities, by an accumulation of these transformative cultural experiences – as individuals, then rippling out as communities and outwards further still to our sense of ourselves as a city: as Glasgow.

Glasgow's Review of International Performance reflects, through a celebratory and playful lens, on the seminal moments of contemporary international performance that have visited Glasgow from the late 1980s until 2016, a year on from the closure of the Arches.

It coincides with the inaugural Take Me Somewhere festival in Spring 2017, and we hope it will function as an inspirational interpretation of the landscape of performance history, in a city that has been shaped by its cultural connections to the rest of the world.

GRIP was created via an invitation that simply asked its contributors to consider their most memorable international performance experience in Glasgow. It is a record of flashes of visual memory, physical sensations, political awakenings - following the way individuals, and cities, remember the culture that has made them who they are now. It isn't intended to be a comprehensive, finite history and we purposely chose not to edit either the choices or the content. We now extend the invitation online for anyone to add their own GRIP contribution.

It forms a love letter to Glasgow. The now legendary moment of the year of European Capital of Culture led to the opening of The Arches and for twenty five years the city has defined itself through the new possibilities that art and cultural life can offer. All that is gathered here is testimony to the enduring urgency in our need for collisions between the local and the international and reminds us to fight for the expansive thinking that comes from the global exchange of ideas and concepts.

We are hugely grateful to all the contributors and to Live Art UK for supporting the project.

Jackie Wylie

Founder and Artistic Director: Take Me Somewhere festival

Nick Anderson

Alejandra Herrera Silva: Domestic Labor [Pearce Institute, 2016]

NB: For the purposes of this reflection i'm going to employ the slang word: 'Kin
It's a shortened version of the F-ing word, eg. 'Kin hell! 'Kin nightmare. 'Kin YES!'

Alejandra Herrera Silva embarked on a 24hr journey from Santiago, Chile to get to Govan for BUZZCUT Festival 2016. As per agreement, she took some pocket money from us and went to the charity shops across the road and bought a lot of glassware. Over the next day or so, Alejandra diligently washed the huge amount of glassware. There was also a sheet of glass which had been especially sourced which she added vinyl lettering to. Although it might sound it, this wasn't the performance i'm writing about. Perhaps it was a performance nonetheless though!

I've noticed over the years of BUZZCUT that once we're into day 3 of the festival, audiences seem newly happy to sit in the bar a bit more and catch their breath between performances. I think maybe not everyone knew that Alejandra had started in the room directly adjoining the main bar... but then we heard:

'Kin BANG.
'Kin SMASH.
'Kin CRAAAAAAAAAAASH'.

And dutifully the entire bar starts walking (and in some cases, running) to the room where she was.

Over the course of two non-stop hours, Alejandra vividly orbited the world of glassware, red wine, domestic signifiers, high-heels and arm-wrestling men from the audience.

This special sheet of glass she had prepared with vinyl lettering was propped up against the wall. Somehow it slipped when it wasn't meant to and it smashed on the floor. Alejandra looked at it with almost no expression, shrugged, and moved on. She had things to 'kin SMASH!

'Kin chaos. 'Kin joy!

BUZZCUT is a festival and an organisation that supports live art in/for Scotland. Nick and his best pal Rosana Cade set it up in 2012 and are now approaching their sixth annual festival in April 2017! Nick works as an Amplifier with artists to support their outrageous and inspiring practices.



Julia Bauer

Andy Arnold

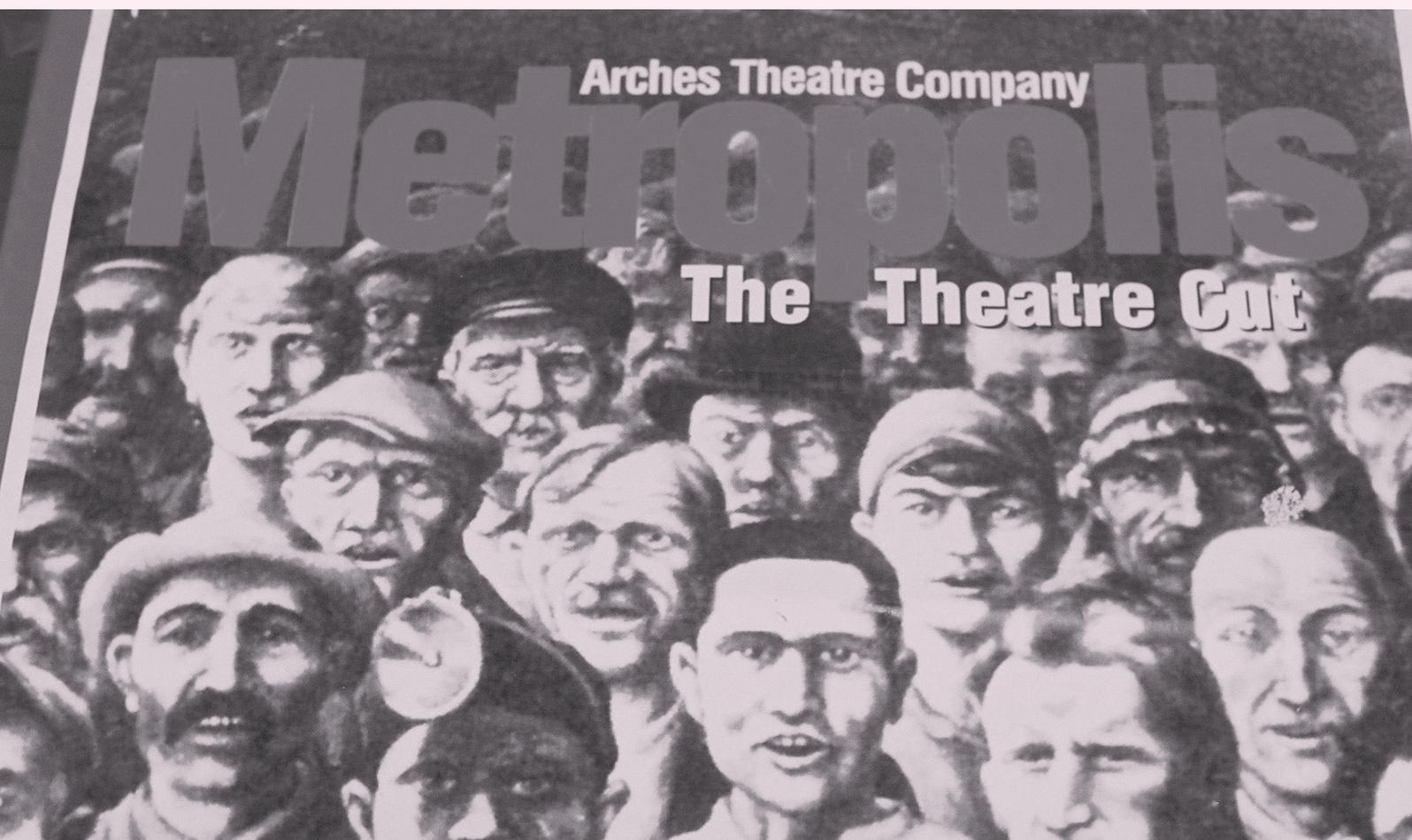
Arches Theatre Company: Metropolis – The Theatre Cut [The Arches, 1993]

A particular memory for me was back in 1993 when we staged our first international theatre collaboration at the Arches and our first use of all the derelict spaces as a promenade performance space. The show was *Metropolis – The Theatre Cut*. This was also the world premiere stage adaptation of Fritz Lang's classic movie. It was international as well as truly local. We had taken an Arches Theatre show, *Noise And Smoky Breath*, to Rostov-on-Don in Russia two years earlier and teamed up with a like-minded troupe while we were out there. I persuaded their director, Uri Solovyev, to come and work with me on this project as well as one of his leading actors, Valeri Voroneen. Uri was a very physical Russian director – very apt for the staging of a silent movie.

Locally, the dearly remembered Ian Smith of Mischief La Bas devised the show with me, his partner Angie Dight transformed herself into the young heroine Maria, Irish musician Ronan Breslin composed the soundscape for a live orchestra and, alongside a few professional actors, we recruited and choreographed over a hundred volunteer performers who mechanically swayed in unison down the dark central spine of the Arches in filmic splendour. Designer Graham Hunter converted those damp and cavernous spaces into a giant film set - Machine Room, Garden of Delight, Professor Rotwang's laboratory, and underground tunnels leading to Maria's secret cave. That stupendous transformation, together with costuming the vast cast was achieved on a two thousand pound budget I remember.

Metropolis - The Theatre Cut was a show which announced the Arches to the world as an extraordinary site specific theatre space and gave a glimpse of the potential it was able to realise over the following twenty years. It was an experience I'll never forget.

Andy Arnold has been Artistic Director of Tron Theatre, Glasgow since 2008. Before that he was the founder and first Artistic Director of The Arches where he spent eighteen years of his life – staging over fifty site specific and studio theatre productions before finally escaping to daylight and dry land.



Cathie Boyd

Dogtroep: Camel Gossip I [Tramway, 1992]

This beautiful work by Dogtroep (est. 1975 by visual artists) was an intimate and poetic journey told through an abstract musical story around Tramway. Camel Gossip I took us to areas we had never seen before with musicians often holding centre stage in absurd outfits. It will stay in my mind forever - it was fun, daring, beautifully sensual and most of all took sensational risks.

For the creation of this work Dogtroep worked with five (very fortunate) Glasgow artists over a six-week period in residence at Tramway to create a specially conceived show. The great thing about this company was their ability to surprise and often with a great sense of humour; the (human) hen at the top of the Tramway walls laying eggs, the small wiggled ladies swinging as they sang and the musician playing double base under an intense rain curtain was such a stunning image.

This is one of the many incredible works I saw at Tramway, which was both musical and extremely visual, which led me to set up Cryptic as no one in Scotland was making this style of work. I think this work amongst the many others at Tramway in the early 90's inspired a whole generation of artists to take risks in developing cross artform work.

Cathie Boyd, Artistic Director, founded Cryptic in 1994 with the desire to create innovative performances that would 'ravish the senses' of international audiences. Over the course of the last 22 years Cathie has led the evolution of the company from music theatre to where it is today: Scotland's leading producing art house, having presented work in 27 countries.



Anita Clark

Caroline Bowditch: Falling in Love with Frida [CCA, 2014]

Marc Brew Company: (i)land [Merchant City Festival, 2014]

Like other contributors to this publication, I have experienced an incredible range of contemporary performance in Glasgow since the early 1990s. I have been inspired, challenged and bewildered by the imagination of international artists who have performed at our venues and festivals.

Glasgow attracts artists from across the world, not only to perform, but also to make their homes here. And by becoming part of our performing arts community, these new Weegies are shaping and influencing contemporary performance making in the city. For my contribution, I wanted to consider recent work by two Aussie, dance-makers and performers who now live and practice in Glasgow; Caroline Bowditch and Marc Brew.

I first saw a preview performance of *Falling in Love with Frida* in the cinema space at the CCA in March 2014. As we enter the space, Caroline is laid out on a yellow table. We are taken on an intimate journey with Caroline's own life experiences, woven into the stories of Frida Kahlo with nips of tequila all round. For me this was a sensual and bold performance - full of humour and utterly disarming.

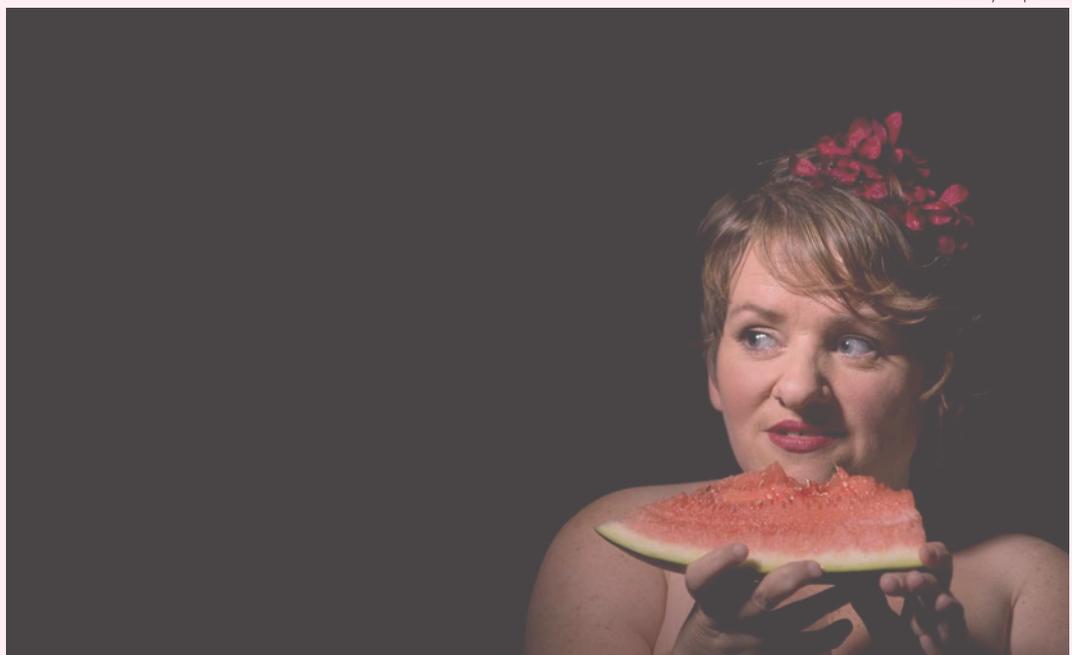
Marc created *(i)land* for the 2014 Commonwealth Games Cultural programme, bringing 6 tons of sand into Glasgow's Merchant City. I encountered the work on a scorching July afternoon as I slathered suntan lotion onto peely-wally skin and endeavoured to restrain my two year old daughter from climbing onto the sand to join in with the performers. I loved how this piece surprised its audience – those who had turned out to see it and those who just came across it in the street.

Caroline and Marc each make distinctive and very different work. They are both disabled choreographers, placing disabled bodies at the heart of their performances. Through their practice, they are hugely influential on contemporary dance in Scotland; challenging narrow perceptions of the dancing body and fuelling a vision for dance that is radically inclusive.

Both of these pieces – created in Glasgow by international artists – have travelled the world bringing another dimension to Glasgow's reputation as an international home for the performing arts.

Anita Clark has worked in dance since the early 1990s as a practitioner, producer and in funding and policy. She is currently Director of The Work Room, an artist-led organisation supporting choreographic research, based at Tramway in Glasgow. She was previously Head of Dance at Creative Scotland/ Scottish Arts Council from 2004 – 2016.

Anthony Hopwood



Jo Clifford

Peter Brook: The Mahabharata [Tramway, 1988]

I feel I should say that seeing the 'Mahabharata' in the Tramway was the most profound theatrical experience of my life. But it wasn't. In fact I found bits of it very dull.

I reproached myself for this; but at the end, when we were presented with a vision of heaven in which the female members of the cast served the men, me and my partner were both just furious.

But I did learn something. I learnt the Tramway was a beautiful space I badly wanted to write in. Of course I wasn't allowed to. At that stage in my career I was still imprisoned in studio spaces. I learnt there was a whole world outside Europe I wanted to explore. I learnt I wanted to write for multi-racial casts. I learnt I wanted to write on a bigger scale. So I wrote *Light In The Village*, which did have a multi racial cast and was about the relation between the rich and poor in the world and was to be part of a cycle of five plays that was to write about a theatre from a global perspective.

Light In The Village did badly in the UK, and the second play, *War In America* was rejected by the Lyceum after they commissioned it. (They said it was "too offensive" and would frighten off their subscribers). And no-one was interested in the cycle. It's only now that *War In America* will be produced (next spring by the Attic Collective). And the Royal Exchange has commissioned the third play. So I might, I just might, get the cycle finished before I die.

And I still haven't written for the Tramway. But I was right about the Tramway being a beautiful space. I know because I've just performed in it.

Jo Clifford is a playwright, poet and performer. She has written about 80 plays, many of which have been performed all over the world. She is currently working on a new play with Chris Goode which she will perform at the Traverse with the National Theatre of Scotland during the 2017 Fringe. She is a proud father and grandmother.



Minty Donald

Glasgow International [Various venues, 2005 onwards]

Memories that take me somewhere...

Jimmie Durham's socks. A pair of grey, woolen socks that the American-born artist claimed had been knitted for him in 1969 by a woman called Margaret Fraser, the first time he visited Scotland. Passed hand-to-hand around the audience gathered for his performance/talk, *The Usual Song and Dance Routine With a Few Minor Interruptions*, programmed as part of Glasgow International Festival (GI), 2010. But I don't actually remember this. I do recall going to Durham's performance, finding it provocative and inspirational. I remember laughter, and Durham's charming and disarming evasion of direct answers and statements. And now, when I look at, read or think about Durham's work, I seem to recognise themes and approaches that have influenced and affirmed my own practice. But this is hindsight. I only now remember the socks when prompted by my partner, and when the memory is reignited by watching archive video of Durham's performance. (Those socks don't look hand-knitted to me, by the way.) I remember Durham's talk and residency at Glasgow Sculpture Studios as part of GI, a city-wide festival now taking place bi-annually over two weeks in the often chilly, but lengthening, days of April and May. Since 2005, GI has found me and hundreds of others exploring parts of Glasgow we'd overlooked, entering sites we'd walked past, encountering work from local and emerging artists alongside that of international artists with global reputations. My memories include a slide carousel installation of Simon Starling's *Autoxylopyrocycloboros*, talking dolphins in the ruins of Caledonia Road Church (*The Circus Between Worlds*), sharing a potluck dinner with Jimmie Durham, drifting across the city with an illicit outdoor carryout. I don't know if my memories are 'true' or if they date from the GI edition of 2005, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014 or 2016. And I don't think it matters. This is, I believe, how influence and inspiration works — through partial recollection, re-imagining and re-appropriation. (It's also apt, given that Durham's practice deals in the slipperiness of memories, 'unreliable' narratives, histories and mythologies — a kind of trickster resistance to the 'official' version.) What matters is that my GI memories take me somewhere else — whether prompting small shifts in my practice, or moving me to imagine alternative futures.

Minty Donald is an artist and senior lecturer in contemporary performance practices at the University of Glasgow. She is interested in the idea of more-than-human performance, where performing is understood as not just a human activity. Minty works regularly with (human) collaborator Nick Millar. Recent work includes THEN/NOW, a public art project with/for the Forth and Clyde Canal and Guddling About, an ongoing project with rivers and other watercourses, which has been performed in Canada, Spain, Germany, Australia and the UK.



Angus Farquhar

Dumb Type: pH [Tramway, 1991]

Dumb Type arrived on tour to Glasgow during a period when Tramway had the level of live budget that could put it at the forefront of international commissioning in Europe. From the pre 1990 performances of Peter Brook, Rosas and the Test Dept/Brith Gof collaboration Gododdin (one of my highlights of a decade in the band) through to the entire Cultural Capital year, Neil Wallace built a hugely ambitious programme. Work of scale both responded to the singular spaces in the building and as a result Scottish audiences were exposed to some profoundly original new work. Dumb Type and *pH* stand out in my mind.

We, the audience, sat on two sides of a gallery structure, looking down into the heart of what looked like a vast mechanical photocopier which moved relentlessly up and down a white vinyl rectangular auditorium. Performers trapped in a web of projected imagery and 'choreographed' by the imposition of two moving bars that swept the space were regularly knocked from chairs to the ground moving with desperate or frozen gestures through a world of digitised anonymity.

Dumb Type were the first artists group I had seen who seamlessly incorporated new technological and architectural elements into their work. Now such installations are common but at this time, they broke new ground in both creatively harnessing the potential of automation and computer programming with physical movement while simultaneously critiquing its effect on us as individuals and a society. Hailing from Kyoto in Japan they were ahead of the curve in refining a cross-disciplinary art form and I for one found the work disturbing, exciting and it inspired me to further explore machine/computer/human interaction over a series of works such as Virtual World Orchestra, Soundworks and Pain in the mid-nineties.

Angus Farquhar has been Creative Director of NVA organisation, since 1992. It is one of Britain's most successful independent arts charities. This followed 10 years as a founding member of the London music group Test Dept. Recent commissions include Speed of Light, Ghost Peloton and the resuscitation of St Peter's seminary as a national platform for public art.



LJ Findlay-Walsh

Ann Liv Young: Solo [The Arches, 2007]

Ann Liv Young offended before she was ever present at the Arches. A phone call from border control confirmed the artist they held was 'quite' pregnant and I remember being surprised at how many people had an opinion on a pregnant woman embarking on a high-energy performance. How fascinating that an artist who succeeds in reclaiming the physical territory of the female body on stage was being challenged on her decisions effecting that body before she'd set foot on it.

A couple of years later something unusual happened - we got some 'hate mail'. One of the letters cut out from magazines and glued together piece by piece said something like: 'Ann Liv isn't all that!'. I never told Ann Liv. Perhaps an artist who sees the audience as making the work with her, who considers herself as a sculptor of the live encounter, would have been invigorated by this physical manifestation of indignation spilling out of the performance arena. There was something about this letter that seemed to sum up the Ann Liv experience for me. There was something about the garishness of all those fonts on glossy paper, an embodiment of both the real and a cartoon-like fakeness, aggressive and humorous at the same time.

After Solo I think things changed. Ann Liv presented in mainland Europe, the practice of artists in Scotland and abroad now seemed to talk to each other in new, distinct ways. The floodgates opened and 'risk' seemed to take on a whole new meaning. The energy felt more like a gig than 'theatre'. A generation of artists were inspired to be fearless; to be confrontational; to glory in the mess of it all; to move away from the nostalgic and dance comfortably in the discomfort of their own creation.

LJ Findlay-Walsh is Executive Producer of Mischief La-Bas and Associate of Glasgow's Take Me Somewhere festival. She was Producer of the Arches, Glasgow until its closure in 2015. She has worked in curation and artist development across Europe, for Plateaux Festival in Frankfurt as well as Glasgow's international festival Behaviour.



Janice Forsyth

The Wooster Group: Frank Dell's The Temptation Of St. Antony [Tramway, 1990]

I'd first seen New York company, The Wooster Group, at the Edinburgh International Festival in 1986, when they performed *LSD (...Just The High Points)*.

Their original, risk-taking, profound, often funny approach to theatre-making just clicked with me. I adored the **LIVENESS** of what they were doing – monitors strewn across the stage, cameras trained on the actors talking into microphones, chopped up texts, sonic surprises, pop culture mixed with classical texts.

It wasn't an infatuation – since then I've seen them perform at their base at the Performing Garage in NYC, but the highlight for me was when they came to Glasgow's Tramway in 1990. I booked tickets for all three of their shows – *L.S.D.*, *Brace Up!* (a work in progress) and the one I'll always remember, *Frank Dell's The Temptation Of St. Antony*.

The Wooster Group sound/visuals trippiness was anchored by a virtuoso performance by Ron Vawter, as a drugged-up, obsessive Lenny Bruce replaying a video of a late-night naked cable chat show, with Flaubert text dubbed in and everything looping back to the spiritual quest of St Antony. And yes, you did have to be there, and no, of course you didn't understand it all, and yes, it often looked chaotic, but, no, it was meticulously choreographed. And the stripped-back, bare-walled Tramway was the perfect venue.

It was multi-media theatre before that term became a cliché, and it had a huge impact on me and on a new generation of theatre makers and performance artists, encouraging them to take risks, to be free-wheeling AND rigorous. In the bar afterwards, I found myself standing next to Ron Vawter. I wanted to thank him, congratulate him, buy him a drink. Young eejit that I was, I overthought it, and said nothing. Four years later my hero died of AIDS, aged 45.

Janice forsyth has always worked in the arts in Scotland – initially with theatre companies and festivals, then presenting TV and radio shows and writing in newspapers and magazines. As well as presenting her daily music and arts show on BBC Radio Scotland, Janice is co-creating an exciting new online project to be launched in 2017.



Gillian Garrity

La Fura Dels Baus: M.T.M. [Tramway, 1995]

I was lucky to work at the Tron Theatre in the early 90s and saw so many incredible theatre productions: Michael Boyd's *Macbeth*, *Cyrano de Bergerac* by Comunicado, Theatre Babel & the wonderful *One Yellow Rabbit* from Calgary in Canada, but the one that really opened my eyes to something new and visceral that changed how I thought about theatre was *M.T.M.* by La Fura dels Baus at Tramway in 1995.

The Tramway was packed, the music was hard and loud and I'd never felt scared in the theatre before, my heart was pounding. The half naked actors were running through the audience at full speed, with cameras strapped to their head. Everything was being filmed and shown on a large screens hung above the heads of the audience. Suddenly the giant boxes appeared. They were huge 6/7ft tall maybe, and they were being pushed at speed through the audience. We were running, exhilarated but scared. I don't know how it happened without me noticing but suddenly there was a huge wall of boxes down the entire length of the Tramway and worst of all I was on the on the wrong side of it. Looking at the huge screen we could all see what was happening on the other side of the wall: A banquet, drinks flowing, champagne, dancing on tables - they were having a party and we were on the wrong side of the wall. People started getting frantic, desperately trying to get around the wall, get over the wall, get through the wall. It might seem obvious now, but of course there was no party, the film had been switched and both sides were trying everything to get across to the other side. The company stood back and observed our increasing desperation.

We left marveling at how easily we'd been manipulated, how quickly we'd fallen into their pre-planned narrative and ultimately how the greed, desperation and mass panic of an entire room of normally rational people spiraled into utter chaos. Not perhaps dissimilar to the world we find ourselves in now.

Gillian is currently Executive Producer for Take Me Somewhere and has produced touring theatre at major venues and festivals both in the UK and across Europe, North and South America and Asia.



Christine Hamilton

Théâtre Répère: Tectonic Plates [Tramway, 1990]

As I write, it is 26 years ago to the day when I first saw Robert Lepage's *Tectonic Plates*. 'First' because it made such an impression on me that I went to see it twice during its run at Tramway. Even so, it is hard to put any detail on why I found it so engaging and why it remains with me. It was elusive, accessible and triumphantly theatrical.

It was not the first time I had seen international work: the Edinburgh International Festival has always been part of my theatre-going life. Moreover during the 70s and 80s Glaswegians had access to the great European classics startlingly produced by the Citz. It was not even the first time I had seen work from Quebec: Michel Tremblay had been produced by Michael Boyd at the Tron. Nor was it the first international event at Tramway: we had seen Brook's epic *Mahabharata*.

Maybe it was to do with the staging – we sat on a scaffolding structure and looked down on to the action. There was Venice – a waist-high pool of water that the performers crossed, climbing from chair to chair; and there was definitely a grand piano. Or was it the ambiguity of the characters – especially Lepage himself? Or the glorious way in which different strands of the seemingly unconnected plot, moved effortlessly across nations, continents and time, weaving together into perfect harmony? Or maybe it was the mélange of English and French and the ensemble playing from a cast of Quebecois, Scots, French and Welsh actors. Or maybe all of those things and more.

Tectonic Plates is an extended metaphor for human relationships, and the interconnectivity of our existence. As in geology, so in human existence, without the shifting plates there would be no life. Their movement creates huge destruction but it is also the way the planet survives. As another Canadian said 'There is a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in.'

Christine Hamilton is a consultant in cultural policy and has worked in the sector for 40 years. She was at the Citizens' Theatre, 7:84 (Scotland) and TAG then Arts Officer at the STUC before joining the Scottish Arts Council then Glasgow City. Christine founded the Centre for Cultural Policy Research at Glasgow University and the Institute for Creative Enterprise, Coventry University. She is chair of The Touring Network and Untitled Projects. She sees a lot of theatre.



Claudel Huot

Dee Heddon

Jürgen Fritz: Ringing a Bell with Six Pipers [The Arches, 2010]

It is the 17th of March 2010. It is opening night of the 30th anniversary of the National Review of Live Art (NRLA). I am sitting on the concrete beer-stained, sweat-stained floor of one of the railway arches in The Arches. Six male pipers stand in a semi-circle. On the floor, in the centre, is a bell. A middle-aged man wearing a long, heavy dark coat and spectacles enters. This is Jürgen Fritz. Fritz straightens his shirt collar and removes his spectacles, placing them carefully in the top-right pocket of his coat. He pauses. He bends slowly and picks up the bell from the floor. He begins to move his body gently which moves the bell gently. The bell remains silent. He continues to move his body, building up momentum, adding a little more vigour. Almost imperceptibly, a soft peal sounds. Responding to this first chime, a piper inflates his bagpipes and blows a note. Fritz moves more vigorously and as the bell rings out confidently, the pipers join in, one by one, until all six of them are playing, joining the bell, and Fritz is throwing his whole body into the movement, he and the bell one, and the pipes and the bell one, and Fritz and the pipers one, and me and you and the bell and the pipes and Fritz and the pipers and the bricks and the arches one as their dialogue reverberates through my skin, my scalp, my heart, and the space, the sound soaring towards a heart-racing, skin-prickling, eye-watering crescendo.

And then the pipers stop. Just Fritz and the bell move and ring, like an aching, haunting lament. Ringing out. Fritz, eyes closed now, keeps bending, ascending, descending, ringing, bending, ascending, descending, ringing, his drenching sweat testimony to the sheer kinetic effort, bell and man one, I ring, I ring, I ring, I ring, I ring...

Postscript: As I watch *Ringing a Bell with Six Pipers*, I know that Fritz is opening the last ever NRLA. What I don't know is that in a few years' time The Arches will close suddenly. Perhaps ghostly peals ring now through the empty spaces of that much-loved place? Or perhaps the resonances of these chimes are picked up and resounded by Nic Green, whose hand-cast bells made for *Turn* (2016) ring out a commitment to the communion of dialogue, though here the conversation turns towards women.

Dee Heddon holds the James Arnott Chair in Drama at the University of Glasgow, where she teaches and researches contemporary performance. She is the author of numerous publications, including *Autobiography and Performance* and *Devising Performance: A Critical History*. She is the co-editor of *Histories and Practice of Live Art* and *It's All Allowed: The Performances of Adrian Howells*. Dee was a Board Member of *New Moves International* (NRLA) and *The Arches*.



Kieran Hurley

Jan Lauwers & Needcompany: *Isabella's Room* [Tramway, 2006]

I'm not sure I know how to write about Jan Lauwers & Needcompany's show *Isabella's Room* but I know I want to. I'm some kind of playwright now, and contemporary dance is not my home turf. Besides, I was 20 when I saw it and ten years later I remember vivid fragments of it only. But maybe that's appropriate for a piece about sprawling, contestable social and personal history; a piece about memory, and culture, and time.

See, in 2006 I never knew I'd be a playwright. I knew that stories could look like lots of things. But I didn't know they could look like this.

Endless colonial artefacts, like a weird museum exhibit. A woman on bass guitar. The performers' sweating half-naked bodies. Viviane De Muynck at the centre of it all perched on a chair, mic in hand; older, bigger, wrinklier and punk rock and sexy as hell.

In the bar afterwards someone will passionately explain to me why the whole thing was actually racist and I won't have discovered post-colonial theory yet and won't have the confidence I need to make sense of my own thoughts. At home my flatmate will pin the flyer to the wall next to cut out pin-ups of Gang of Four, where it'll stay for two years until we all move out.

It's harder to see this kind of work in Glasgow now. But in the same vast derelict-space years later, I'll write the words for a theatre piece about a musician who drew fiercely on the international and the contemporary to make sense of his own story.

A light pulsing melody. A dancer glides across the stage, his body flickering in time. Voices lilting in harmony, repeat, over and over; "we go on and on and on, we go on..."

Kieran Hurley is an award-winning writer, performer and theatre-maker living in Glasgow whose work has been presented across the UK and internationally. Past work includes Heads Up (Show And Tell, Made In Scotland), Rantin (National Theatre of Scotland); Beats (Arches); Hitch (Arches/Forest Fringe); Chalk Farm, co-written with AJ Taudevin (OranMor/ThickSkin).



Stewart Laing

Gob Squad: Western Society [CCA, 2015]

Gob Squad's *Western Society* really got inside me – and has stayed rattling around inside there for the eighteen months since I saw it in Glasgow as part of The Arches Behaviour Festival in 2015. I feel like it is what I aspire to, and when I have an inkling that something is missing in work of my own that I'm preparing I consciously think back to it and contemplate its bravery, its coolness, its relevance, its unfamiliarity, and its originality.

Western Society is many things. It is a meditation on a short, unremarkable YouTube home video of some friends having a party. It is a timeline of Western civilization from the Stone Age to the 21st century. It is an exemplar of contemporary values, celebrated with Prosecco and Ferrero Rocher chocolates. I like the way Gob Squad involve members of the audience as performers in their shows – in Gob Squad's *Kitchen* the moment of magic for me was realising that EVERYONE on stage was a member of the audience, and that the original Gob Squad performers were ALL in the audience. In *Western Society* the audience don't replace – they gently invade.

In *Western Society* specially selected members of the audience recreate the YouTube video clip. It isn't a very finessed copy, of something that wasn't very finessed in the first place. But it is a profound copy. An amateur copy of an amateur video becomes sublime – in its embarrassment, in its fun, in its funniness, in its hopelessness – it becomes the most profound and moving action I've seen onstage in years.

Western Society repeatedly, and literally, asks the question 'what are we doing here?' Isn't that the question all great art should ask of us? It's the question all artists should be asking while making. What are we doing here?

Stewart Laing is Artistic Director of *Untitled Projects* where his work includes *Slope*, *An Argument About Sex*, *Backwards and Forwards*, *Paul Bright's Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, and *Slope Redux* (all by Pamela Carter). For *Untitled Projects* he has also directed *J.G. Ballard Project*, *blind_sight*, and *The Salon Project*. Work as a director elsewhere includes *The Homosexual* (Tramway), *Home: Stornoway* (National Theatre of Scotland), *Ten Plagues* (Traverse), *The Maids* (Citizens Theatre), *Ophelia* (Oran Mor), *Titus Andronicus* (Dundee Rep) and *The Sewing Group* (Royal Court). Stewart also directs opera, including *La bohème* (Scottish Opera); *The Breasts of Tiresias* and *L'heure espagnole* (Grange Park Opera); *Tosca* (Norrlandsoperan); and *Dead Man Walking* (Malmö Opera).

David Baltzer



David Leddy

Annie Sprinkle: Post Porn Modernist [CCA, 1994]

Annie Sprinkle's now legendary piece *Post Porn Modernist* is about her life as an ex-porn star. I was nineteen and a student at Lancaster University. We asked our lecturers to take us on a field trip, minibus and all. Even though we were well-versed in the crazy avant-garde this piece was pretty wild stuff. Annie inserts a speculum so you can queue up to see her cervix. She projects banned photos of herself being penetrated by a disabled woman's footless leg stump. She informs us that over the years she swallowed 4.8 litres of semen. She gives her used knickers to our lecturer as a souvenir. And all with a wry, mischievous grin. We'd imagined she'd be punky and confrontational but are mesmerised to find her shy and sweet on stage. We're all in love. At one point she asks if anyone wants to come up and photograph her. Awkward silence. Then one of the mature students pushes their camera into my hands and shoves me on stage where I snap Annie in various pornographic poses. We later got in trouble when we sent the film to Boots The Chemist for processing. The show culminates in her smearing herself in menstrual blood and masturbating to orgasm whilst we encourage her by shaking makeshift maracas made out of plastic cups with rice inside. After the show we shuttled home down the motorway in our minibus discussing the best techniques for deep throating. The piece was unlike anything I've seen before or since and it had a profound effect on me. It was so exuberant, so fun, so sex-positive. Seven years later that excitement was still with me as I left London, moved to Glasgow and never looked back. In the interval I'd had a polaroid taken with Annie's tits on my head. That photo still sits on the shelf in my office, like a beacon of joy.

David Leddy is a writer-director who has been described as a 'maverick' (Guardian), a 'genius' (Scotsman), an 'iconoclast' (The List) and an 'institution' (Independent). His work has been shown around the world from Boston to Buenos Aires, São Paulo to Santiago, Milan to the Isle of Mull.



Nikki Milican

Too Many To Name

Between 1987 and 2012 I was in Glasgow, curating cross media arts programmes and development opportunities for local, national and international artists, busy years that were all – in different ways – full of memorable events. So when Jackie Wylie asked me to pick out just one highlight... I hesitated. I felt it would be unfair to all the artists I have worked with over the years, and I wasn't prepared to isolate one from the many, not least for a publication those artists might read!

I'm nonetheless reluctant to ignore a substantial part of the city's - and my own - creative adventures. Partly because so many people still tell me about the impact the festivals, in particular, contributed to - and positively influenced - the cultural fabric of the city. I realise that for many contributors to this publication, the remembered highlights will probably be the big, sexy artists who graced Glasgow's stages over the years, building profile that reinforced the city's 1990 status as a European City of Culture. But sometimes it is the new and unknown that takes you completely by surprise, offering work that unexpectedly resonates strongly with us and really gets under our skins. Time passes, artists come and go, but those ephemeral encounters leave a lasting legacy in hearts and minds. I have so many of those potent memories. I am lucky, I know. And I will be forever grateful to the city that made them possible.

Nikki Milican is the former performance director @ Third Eye Centre, Glasgow and award winning Artistic Director of New Moves International, producers of New Territories international festival of performance and The National Review of Live Art. She is currently a freelance curator, her most recent festival programme was SACRED:Homelands, Toynbee Studios, London.



Artificial

CJ Mitchell

Les Ballets C de la B: Bonjour Madame, comment allez-vous aujourd'hui, il fait beau, il va sans doute pleuvoir ... [Tramway, 1994]

From Brussels, Alain Platel's *Bonjour Madame, comment allez-vous aujourd'hui, il fait beau, il va sans doute pleuvoir ...* ("Good Day, Ma'am, how are you today, nice weather, it's sure to rain ...") was part of the New Moves Across Europe festival in 1994. It left me bored and perplexed – it may have had its moments, but felt disjointed, unclear, messy and affectless.

Four months later, at a different festival in a different country, I saw the piece again, and was transformed. The performers, their characters, their psychologies, their interactions, their motivations, their behaviours, their inner lives, their bravado and their vulnerabilities, all resonated clearly, and were seen and felt.

First time around, I simply hadn't recognized the work or what it was doing, but my boundaries later shifted – boundaries which then hopefully accommodated other works and experiences in ways which wouldn't otherwise have been possible.

Both times I saw it, the piece had been curated by Nikki Milican, who tirelessly identified and presented the most distinctive and extraordinary range of national and international performance and dance. Nikki's curatorial impact on Glasgow's audiences and artists was enormous – particularly when you consider that her curatorial eye was central to the Third Eye Centre, CCA, National Review of Live Art, New Moves Across Europe, New Moves International and New Territories.

In the late 80s, my theatre-going routines expanded significantly with Nikki's programming of work by DV8, Wim Vandekeybus, Anne Seagrave, Laurie Booth and others. (A singular moment: when the performers in DV8's *Dead Dreams of Monochrome Men* didn't come back on stage for the audience's applause, the intense pain within the performance, and the intensity of the performance on the performers, was felt even further.)

The scope and scale of Nikki's programming expanded in the 90s, and her support of international work by Ron Athey, Goat Island, Guillermo Gómez-Peña and Black Market International had an incredible impact on both audiences and artists in Glasgow and across the UK.

Without wishing to suggest we need to see work a second time when we didn't enjoy the first outing (though there may be something in that strategy), I remain thankful to Nikki for introducing me to many difficult experiences.

CJ Mitchell is Co-Director of the Live Art Development Agency, London. Previously, CJ was Executive Director of the Links Hall performance space in Chicago; Managing Director of Performing Arts Chicago; Administrative Director of the Master of Arts in Arts Administration programme at The School of The Art Institute of Chicago; Company Manager of Goat Island Performance Group; and General Manager of the Centre for Contemporary Arts in Glasgow. (Full-disclosure: CJ worked alongside Nikki at the CCA in the early 90s, and when Nikki went independent with New Moves Across Europe, CJ was their part-time bookkeeper.)



Chris van der Burght

Chitra Ramaswamy

La Fura Dels Baus: Manes [Tramway, 1997]

I had just arrived in Glasgow: a loud, excitable and hungry teenager from London. Somehow, as one occasionally does, I ended up exactly where I was supposed to be. Running around Tramway 1 in the cavernous dark, chased by nimble (and semi-naked) Catalan performance artists. Carrying dead chickens. What an introduction to Glasgow, culture, live art, life.

I have no idea what this deeply experimental and anarchic performance was about: birth, death, sex, and food according to La Fura Dels Baus's synopsis of *Manes*. All I know is that it was shocking, extreme, frightening and I had never seen anything like it. There was techno music playing, strobe lights and, well, those chickens with their skinned and wrinkly bodies flung this way and that. Those performers shouting at me and my newly made friends from student halls like gothic creatures from the deep. I remember no dialogue, plot, or point. I thought I remembered buckets of 'blood' being thrown at us as we ran around screaming but when I rewatched excerpts on Youtube twenty years later it turned out to be water.

I recall *Manes* as a kind of horribly irresistible nightmare. It was also a portal: into Glasgow, European city of culture, my new life as the sort of person who went to weird, difficult stuff like this, and, probably most importantly of all, to Tramway. *Manes* was site-specific theatre before I knew site specific theatre existed. And what a site it specified. An industrial cathedral, as Peter Brook called it, where you could see the best (and occasionally worst) of international art and performance. A piece of New York dropped in Glasgow's South Side where over the next decade or so I would see everything from Barbara Kruger to the launch of the National Theatre of Scotland, Cindy Sherman to Alan Cumming's *Macbeth*, Matthew Barney to Michael Clark. The best of everything in an old Glasgow tram shed.

Chitra Ramaswamy is an award winning freelance journalist and author whose book, Expecting: The Inner Life of Pregnancy (Saraband) won the 2016 Saltire First Book of the Year Award. Originally from London, she lived in Glasgow from 1997-2007 (the Optimo years!) where she studied English Literature and Philosophy at Glasgow University, and is now based in Leith, Edinburgh, with her partner, son, and rescue dog.



Seona Reid

Centre International de Creations Theatrales: The Tempest (La Tempête) [Tramway, 1990]

A tall, black man carrying a long pole in his hands and wearing a strange headdress runs towards us and stops in the centre of the stage. With a simple rainmaker, filled with dried seeds, he creates a rhythmic rustling sound which becomes louder and louder, his body swaying from side to side, as the sound increases. It is the sound of waves in a sea which becomes rougher and rougher. I became aware of his headdress – an old fashioned sailing ship, pitching and tossing with the man's movements. A sailing boat in ... a Tempest.

This wonderful opening set the scene for one of the most intelligent, fluid, seamless and watchable pieces of theatre I have ever seen. I forgot I was watching a play in a language I barely understood, because I could understand everything, even if the actual words (in French) did not mean much to me. It was theatre at its most simple, elegant, energised and powerful. I have never forgotten it.

Seona Reid's professional career has spanned many aspects of arts and culture including Director of the Scottish Arts Council (1990-99) and Director of The Glasgow School of Art (1999-2013). She is currently Chair of the National Theatre of Scotland and of Cove Park artist centre; Deputy Chair of Heritage Lottery Fund and Chair of its Scotland Committee; a Trustee of the Tate Gallery; and Scottish Commissioner to the UK-US Fulbright Commission.



Steven Thomson

La Fura Dels Baus: M.T.M. [Tramway, 1995]

Imagine a huge empty white room with an audience of several hundred people and a line of giant cardboard boxes splitting the room. Everyone looks around, some nervous, some expectant, wide-eyed wondering what on earth this show is going to do to us. Suddenly without warning performers explode from boxes, sailing through the air, somersaulting, spitting, and raging at each other and us. Within minutes amidst a cacophony of percussive high energy music we are all on the move. Boxes form walls, performers marshal us and we all move into a new formation. You have no choice. Stand still and be crushed or be swept away in a human tide. And so this immense production took Tramway by storm on a warm spring night at the height of Glasgow's most successful festival – Mayfest.

As a young 30yr old theatre manager I spent several nights picking up and dusting down patrons who were swept asunder in this mass spectacle. Tramway's main exhibition hall was the setting for this unique show. La Fura's intention was to alienate us, shift us, control and organise us with heightened language, huge projections and live broadcast imagery. I watched many of the audience leave the show each night dazed and confused looking totally blown away by the experience. It seemed to be a show with a portent of the future, how the masses are manipulated by media, imagery, sounds, news, portents of doom and the need to shift or migrate to safety in haste.

Looking back over 21 years it certainly foretold the current state of the world and the perils of an uncaring world torn apart by the propaganda of social media, despotic leaders, terrible wars, mass migration and virtual destruction.

La Fura dels Baus certainly expanded my universe and gave Glasgow that high profile, radical edge that it so needs today.

Steven Thomson has worked in the arts since 1983, beginning his career at the Tron theatre, leading to the RSAMD, New Moves, Bill Byden's The Big Picnic, King's, Mitchell and Tramway Theatres and recently as an award winning Producer of the former Glasgow! Festival (2004-2014).



John Tiffany

Théâtre Répère: Tectonic Plates [Tramway, 1990]

I saw *Tectonic Plates*, directed by Robert Lepage, in 1990 at the Tramway in Glasgow. It made me want to be a theatre director – it blew my mind. I was studying science at the time, at Glasgow university. I found *Tectonic Plates* contemporary and yet epic. It moved effortlessly between Montreal, Venice, New York and Paris. It was about an art student called Madeleine who was studying in Montreal. Her art teacher was played by Lepage himself. One day, he disappeared without trace and 20 years later turned up as a transvestite talkshow host. Lepage was hilarious in the role – the piece was in French and English (I didn't think you could do that!). It was sublime. He was 32 at that time. He seemed more like a rock star than an out-of-reach auteur. I wanted to be him. I still do. The show's central image was of tectonic plates as a metaphor for the forces that shape the way we think, act and feel. This never felt lofty or out of reach. Lepage makes the epic intimate, accessible and human. He made me realise that theatre was by far the best way of telling stories. We began in a Montreal library, then the light suddenly changed and the books became the Manhattan skyline. The audience gasped. I loved the simplicity. And yet there was nothing literal about it. I remember thinking: I want to tell stories like this. Lepage influenced my ambition as a director. I want to create magic for people and for them to see how it is done. I want audiences to recognise that magic can be found in the ordinary.

John Tiffany's recent directing credits include Harry Potter and the Cursed Child (West End); Macbeth (Broadway / Tramway); The Glass Menagerie (Broadway / West End / EIF); Once (Broadway / West End); The Twits, Hope & The Pass (Royal Court, as Associate Director); Let The Right One In (also West End, St Ann's), Enquirer, The Missing, Peter Pan and several other productions for the National Theatre of Scotland, where he was a founding Associate Director from 2005 to 2012. John was a Radcliffe Fellow at Harvard University in the 2010-2011 academic year.



Al Seed

Slava: Snow Show [King's Theatre, 1997]

I first saw Slava Polunin and Angela De Castro's clown masterpiece, Snow Show, at the Kings Theatre, Glasgow, in 1997. At the time I was studying Theatre and Film & TV at Glasgow Uni and was fixed upon becoming a screenwriter. That plan was replaced the following year by my setting up of a theatre company with fellow graduates. 18 months later I was leaving Scotland to go and study physical theatre.

Snow Show had taken a long time to work its way through my system. I was haunted by its images; recalling its opening in particular made a strange sort of terror lurch in me. Slava, in bright yellow jumpsuit, staggered onto stage pulling a rope at the end of which was an unknown burden and in the way he performed this simple task a personality, fully formed, was laid bare. We knew him, and we laughed. With a final tug the tension of the rope gave way and the 'burden' was revealed; Angela De Castro in a grimy trench coat with a noose around her neck. It was more Beckett than Beckett.

Snow Show still tours but Slava and De Castro are gone, replaced by a chorus of protégés. Audiences still laugh and cheer, and this is good. But the strange terror is gone; for most, anyway.

Al Seed is a director-performer based in Glasgow. His work has won him Total Theatre, Fringe First and Herald Angel Awards. As well as working solo he enjoys ongoing collaborations with a number of companies in both the UK and abroad. He is the former Artist in Residence for The Arches, Glasgow, and was the founding Artistic Director of Conflux (now Surge). He has taught theatre-related disciplines for numerous colleges, universities and drama schools and continues to mentor emerging physical performers.



Steve Slater

Victoria Theatre: **White Star** [Tramway, 2005]

I feel strangely conflicted by being asked to recall a performance that had a profound impact on me from my past. So much of what I programmed during my time at Tramway was done so, exactly because it had a profound effect upon me personally and hopefully our audience.

The period between Tramway's re-launch in 2000 until 2009 has shaped subsequent generations of theatre artists and produced a distinct international aesthetic which has become both a recognisable European and a Glasgow style. Dark Light Commissions, Les Ballet C de B, Victoria, Needcompany, TG Stan, Jan Fabre, Robert Lepage, Michel Laub, Quarantine, Forced Entertainment, The Wooster Group, Untitled Projects, Iceland Dance Company, Suspect Culture, Gisel Vienne.

It all feels like a dream now.

If I had to pick one moment then I would cite Victoria Theatre's "White Star" by Lies Pauwles. For me it was a visceral embodiment of everything we were attempting to do with the programme at Tramway at that time. Bold, controversial, terrifying in its fearless portrayal of racism and bigotry – it was as if I had stepped out onto a high wire suspended in fog – I had no idea if the show would work or if indeed I would still have a job by the end of its run!

My aim at that time was to position Tramway at the very sharp end of the cutting edge – capable of presenting work that was truly independent of the industry, ground breaking and original and in many cases the only opportunity people in the UK could see and experience such work. Tramway had become a champion of radical interpretations of theatre and performance, work that challenged the viewer and asked questions about our society and how we live our lives.

Steve is Director of Citymoves Dance Agency in Aberdeen. He has been an active participant in Scottish culture for almost 30 years, including 14 years as senior producer for live art at Tramway, Glasgow. A fine arts graduate and an artist of performance and film/installation, Steve also worked as special advisor for both the Scottish Arts Council and as Head of Dance at Creative Scotland.

Phile Deprez



Drew Taylor

The TEAM: Particularly In The Heartland [The Arches, 2007]

I graduated the Royal Conservatoire Of Scotland in 2006 as an actor. I immediately realised I hated being an actor. I wanted to say my own thing, create my own theatre and my training had provided me little tools in finding out what I should do, to find my voice... I was working part time at Urban Outfitters, attempting to integrate myself into the arts sector through small marketing jobs, and I was just starting to perform my scribbled, rambling "poetry". I was a millennial graduate cliché.

I found a sanctuary at the Arches – I'd go to the occasion gig and club night, but the theatre programme lit me up. I saw people doing things in a theatre that I never thought was "allowed", I was introduced to art forms I never thought existed and saw performances that have stayed with me ever since. Rachel Chavkin and the TEAM's "Particularly In The Heartland" changed what I thought theatre could be, and laid the pathway for the kind of theatre I now make. I saw amazing actors addressing the audience without character, without pretence, urging us to join in... and then seamlessly moving back into character and delivering brilliant dialogue. I saw politics easily woven into the heart of the play – without it ever becoming boring or preachy. I saw athletic performances, and a warm open space, and a story that was about the weird people they had created, and us, and me.

This period of the Arches programming influenced so many of us who now proliferate the UK theatre sector. We paid reasonable money for inspiration, discourse and entertainment from a mouldy darkened archway theatre. And I am so glad I was lost then, because it has helped me to be a bit more found, now.

Drew Taylor is a theatre director, playwright and performance poet based in Glasgow. He makes politically conscious, physically athletic, blackly comedic performance. He likes it bold, messy and very colourful. He has been commissioned for the Glasgow Commonwealth Games 2014 Cultural Festival, Brighton International Festival and received the first Somewhere New commission for the 2017 Take Me Somewhere festival.

Rachel Chavkin



Niall Walker

Leigh Bowery / The Christeene Machine [The Arches, 1994/2015]

The bass was pumpin', the crowd was jumpin'... and through flailing arms and flashing strobes I could see a small stage in the middle of the dancefloor, where a fully grown, blood-soaked, adult baby was emerging from between the legs of a formidable, fanciful being, who was singing as he/she gave birth. It was my first time in this skanky, sweaty, brick underworld – 'The Arches' – and I was absolutely terrified.

Only later would I discover I had witnessed Australian legend Leigh Bowery's infamous 'Birth Performance' and that the baby was his wife, Nicola. And six years later I would find myself working at the venue - no longer scared, but wide-eyed and eager to have my mind expanded by everything it had to offer.

And it was. Performances at Arches club nights became my thing. For me, it was where the magic happened: Uncle John & Whitelock's debut gig inside a shack in a makeshift garden at VAULT; Jonny Woo and team lip-synching, fighting and stripping each other at Horsemeat Disco; Bar Art flash-mobbing wearing mirrorball heads, the lycra-clad, bearded baritone Le Gateau Chocolat singing Nessun Dorma, and Ann Liv Young shouting 'you bunch of A-holes!' whilst wetting herself onstage – all at seminal club night Death Disco.

I thought I'd seen it all. And then, in 2015, I returned to The Arches for Texan drag terrorist Christeene at Dark Behaviour. Their filthy, frenzied whirlwind of explicit dance moves and hefty, thumping hip-hop took me back, way back to the underworld. Once again I was scared, but this time the fear was different: it was the fear that all this was about to end.

Niall Walker is a marketing consultant for the arts in Scotland, and has enjoyed clubbing and contemporary performance in Glasgow since 1993. Dark Behaviour on Saturday 9th May 2015 turned out to be the last night that anyone danced in The Arches.



Neil Wallace

National Theatre of Cluj: The Lesson [Tramway, 1991]

Between 1987 and 1995 (when I left Glasgow) I was privileged to see or present so much outstanding work across the city. I can recall, as if it were yesterday, Neil Bartlett's solo piece *Ready To Catch Him, Should He Fall*, Brith Gof's epic *PAX* in the Harland & Wolff building, George Wylie's *Day Down A Goldmine*, Rosas' first Tramway visit with their Bartók piece, Communicado's site-specific *The Cone Gatherers*. Just five highlights which stick in the memory. It was a whirlwind of excellence, artistic triumph, and trail-blazing, experiment blasting young Scottish and other performers or makers into a brave new world. Some of them, and their successors, continue to captivate that world.

Singling out one experience is *Mission Impossible*. But if I really must choose, it would have to be Mihai Maniutiu's terrifying- and I mean, truly terrifying - version of Ionesco's *The Lesson*, made with the National Theatre of Cluj, Romania. We staged it, totally illegally, in a dank and unlicensed space in Tramway. The actors took immense physical risks, Maniutiu found a totally new reading of the piece anchoring it to the brutality of Ceausescu's Romania.

Neil Wallace was Deputy Director of Glasgow 1990, the city's Cultural Capital of Europe programme of which Tramway was a part. Between 1990 and 1995 he was Programme Director of Tramway. He then moved to the Netherlands and is now Programme Director of the Doelen Concert Hall in Rotterdam, and the International Choral Biennale in Haarlem. He is also active as seminar and workshop leader and directs music theatre productions in the Netherlands and abroad.



Jackie Wylie

Mammalian Diving Reflex: Haircuts By Children [Alice Rocks, 2012]

In 2012 we invited Toronto's Mammalian Diving Reflex to the Arches' Behaviour festival. They describe themselves as a 'culture production workshop' who make site and social-specific performance events. For me they are simply the world's most exciting collective of artists who are dedicated to participatory arts practice – bringing people together through new experiences, often in unexpected ways.

MDR were clear that the project could only take place if the host venue developed a partnership with a school where the pupils came from a range of cultural, economic and social backgrounds. The Glasgow version of *Haircuts By Children* saw The Arches collaborate with the brilliant Oakgrove Primary in Maryhill, with the Canadian company working within the school to shape and develop the final event and oversee the experience for the young people.

John Comerford, Scotland's much loved actor / hairdresser, not only gave up his chic salon Alice Rocks on Gibson Street for the final performance but also volunteered to take on the role of the children's hairdressing instructor ...

Sitting in the class room I watched the joyous astonishment of Oakgrove Primary Six as they were each handed a pair of scissors and for two weeks were taken off curriculum to learn how to cut adult hair. On the weekend of the event unsuspecting regular customers, alongside those specifically attending the festival entered the salon to find the children running the show – the reception, the appointments and proudly delivering a range of mohawks, skinheads, rainbow spray dyes and just your regular trim ...

The event generated gleeful delight – the sheer audacity of it alongside its subversion of social rules and hierarchies, and the intimacy between the strangers involved. Every single person left the salon beaming from ear to ear regardless of what had happened to their hair!

Throughout the weekend the children ran a lemonade stall outside the salon. On the Monday they were told that they were to be given the profits of this enterprise on the condition that they could work together to decide how to spend it. Many ideas were generated – a classroom pet hamster, a day trip, new trainers for all. There were several children in the school from refugee and asylum seeking backgrounds. In the end the class decided to throw a party for their friend who would shortly be leaving – an emotional ending to a life changing project.

Jackie Wylie is the founder and Artistic Director of the Take Me Somewhere festival and the incoming Artistic Director and Chief Executive of the National Theatre of Scotland. Previously she spent a decade at the Arches – first as its Arts Programmer and then as its Artistic Director. She is a 2016/17 Clore Fellow and a graduate of the University of Glasgow.



John Lauener

Jackie Kay

In The Long Run [a poem contributed in response to GRIP]

*Glasgow - gallus, glitzy, fu o' grace. This city's
Heartbeat's your own. Art in its DNA. No self-pity.*

*You'll stride across the Clyde at least twice,
Or race with your grief keeping pace alongside -*

*Run to meet the daughter you lost,
The father you're trying to save; your raised bet; the cost.*

*You'll limber up, keep on, your body a crane,
Ingenious, strong: breathe In, dear green place; carry on.*

*Aye, you'll run: fast, slow, fast, and in slow motion -
Loping past your broken heart, the ways you were mistaken*

*Floating like steamers on the Clyde. The past is tomorrow.
You keep going, and when you get a chance to say, it you borrow*

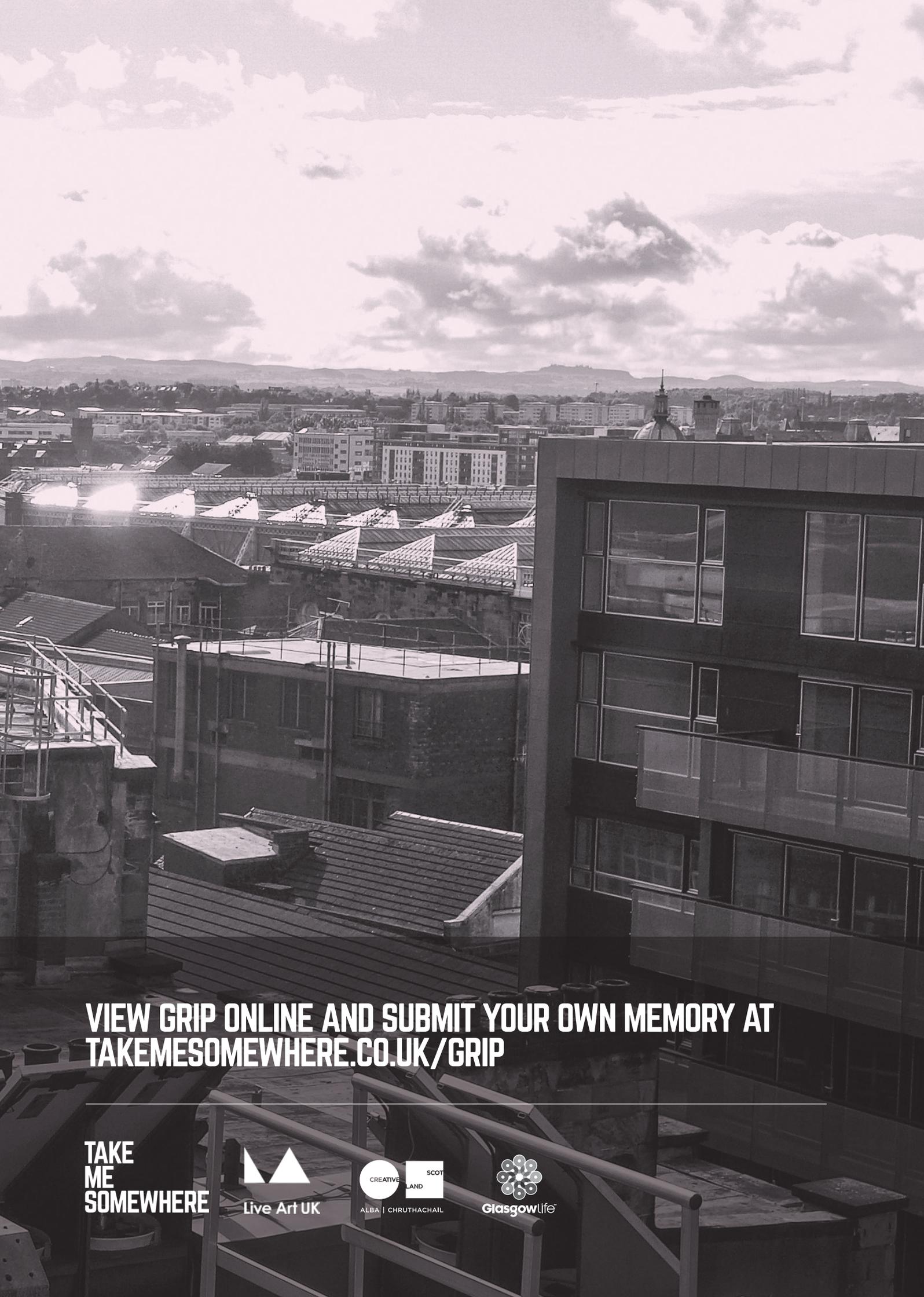
*From your other tongue – GOMA. Briggait. Gaelic, Urdu, Igbo.
Music plays inside, rising, falling: your body's The Armadillo.*

Gaun yersel!

Jackie Kay was born and brought up in Scotland. THE ADOPTION PAPERS won the Forward Prize, a Saltire prize and a Scottish Arts Council Prize. FIERE, her most recent collection of poems, was shortlisted for the COSTA award. Her novel TRUMPET won the Guardian Fiction Award and was shortlisted for the IMPAC award. RED DUST ROAD won the Scottish Book of the Year Award, and the LONDON BOOK AWARD. She was awarded an MBE in 2006, and made a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature in 2002. Her most recent book is a collection of stories, REALITY, REALITY. Jackie Kay was named Scots Makar—the National Poet for Scotland—in March 2016.

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